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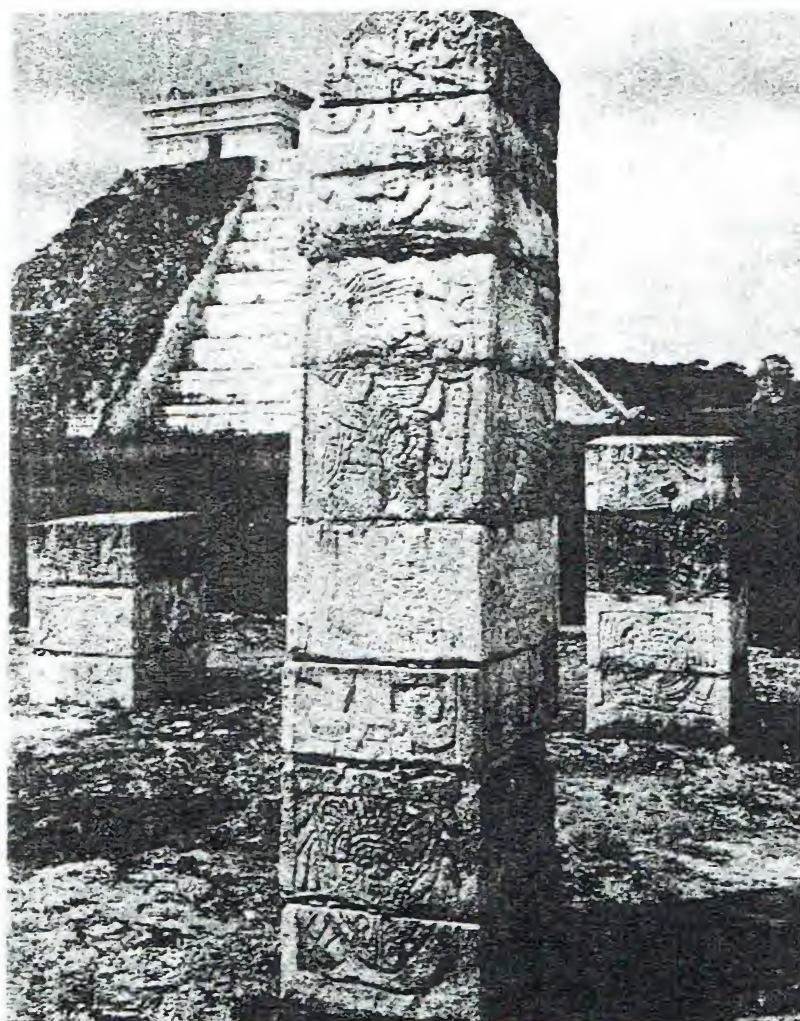
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Your Miracle Power

Mayan Revelation Number 175

Living By Faith

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Beloved Centurion:

The title of this lesson is self-explanatory: LIVING BY FAITH - can you not feel the magnificence of the words and what they portray? As I think on them, a picture of the lives of those who have found the joy of "living by faith" comes before me in my mind's eye.

It is the sincere wish of my heart that every Companion on the Mayan Path, and there are thousands of you, will really find the treasures which can be yours, even though perhaps right now it would seem an impossibility. There are times when it is not easy to have faith and our burdens seem too great to bear, but the burdens can be lifted when faith is strong, when we learn to use that MIRACLE POWER within ourselves which is faith. I learned long ago that without it there is nothing to cling to, nothing on which we can pin our hopes, no other way of solving our problems. I could not live without my faith. It is the greatest thing in my life.

This lesson is designed to make the ability to "live by faith" more easily accessible to you. I strongly believe that it will be extremely helpful. You will notice at the very close of this lecture lesson, we have given you nine rules to follow which we believe, if followed diligently, can open up a whole new way of life for you.

So it is with this hope and prayer in our hearts that we leave this series which we have called YOUR MIRACLE POWER, and we would appreciate greatly hearing from you as to the degree your faith has been strengthened as a result of this study you have just finished. I am hopeful of hearing of some fine progress made on the parts of all of the members in your class.

Let us ask our Heavenly Father for grace, as we make the following petition to Him:

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, help me now to gather up all the understanding of faith I have and use it living my life. Thus let it grow from more to more.

Amen.

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RIGHTEOUSNESS THROUGH FAITH:

One day in the year 1510 a devout man was trying to increase his

righteousness by self-punishment. He was dissatisfied with religious living as he saw it about him, and was seeking something deeper. As he went on with his self-inflicted physical distress a verse appearing in the Books of Habakkuk, Romans, and Hebrews, kept ringing through his mind - "The just (the righteous) shall live by faith (or their faith)." He kept thinking about that sentence till it saturated his soul and he accepted it as a principle of life. From that day on he profoundly affected the life of the ages.

Living by faith, using it as the motivation for daily living, he naturally learned as much about faith in practice as he had already learned by theory. He wrote books about it more illuminating than any he had ever read. One was a commentary on the Book of Romans, the introduction to which had a great deal to say about faith.

One evening in the spring of 1738 a minister was reading aloud from that section in a little meeting in London. Among those present was a young Oxford man who had for years been seeking a faith of which he could be definitely conscious. As the reading went on he felt his heart growing strangely warm. Knowing he had found the faith he sought, from that night on he too lived a new life and made his mark for better things on the life of the world. He too had searched till he found a faith for living.

An older and less cheerful generation used to like to say that faith was good to die by. That was grandly true, but it was not the whole story. It is good to live by too, and that is what most of us need right now.

We need a faith sufficient for the great and spectacular things of life, but no less for the humble and obscure ones, for the things we dream about but also for those with which we must actually deal, for things far away but also for those close at hand. We need a faith of theory but also one of application, a faith that sounds well, but also works well - a faith we can carry anywhere and apply in anything.

There is a school of thought that uses this as a test for truth - "a thing is true if it meets the needs of life." We know air and water exist because they are necessary. By the same token we know that God exists because the world and life are so constructed that they cannot go on without Him. That was what Voltaire meant when he said that if there were no God we would have to invent one.

Faith has a leading part to play in these discernments. It whispers to us that the searching soul will find its God, and that the life looking for an ideal will realize it, and that one seeking strength to accomplish duty will find that strength.

Faith is to the spirit something like air is to the body, - not a luxury but a necessity, not a theoretical need but an actual one. Faith is for the needs of today. Do not fail to keep it on hand.

A BACKWARD LOOK:

To the traveler the most important thing is the road forward, but it is well now and then to pause and look over the distance already traveled. It often discloses things we did not notice as we came, and it often prepares us the better to go on. Let us now do that with the ground we have already covered before starting from here on the home stretch.

We have said that the way to get started in faith is not to wait to understand all about it first, but to have confidence in God and begin the adventure, learning by experience as we go along. We have said that one should study the definitions of faith, but that if he does not find them clear he should not stop or let himself be hindered by them, for that might confuse him all the more, while simple confidence will serve to clear his mind and enable him to make a good and helpful beginning, leaving the rest to clear up one thing at a time.

But even that may not be easy at first. The beginner asks, "How am I to do even this?" We say "Beginner" but that does not necessarily mean a very young person or one who has never made any serious effort to live the spiritual life. Many people have accepted creeds, joined groups, and done some studying; but too many have not taken it seriously and followed through.

Really starting on the adventure of faith is something different. Nothing less than undertaking it as the saints and prophets did is enough. It is not merely a nominal and formal start we mean, but a daring attempt to have a great faith and use it in a great way. Can you make such a beginning? Have you the necessary equipment to start with?

We have already answered that too. We have said that if you do not have confidence, assume it till you have had some experience with it. You will then find, perhaps to your surprise, that you do have it, and are ready to proceed with your great adventure in living.

The formula is plain and simple. Live as though you believed. Do the things you think a person of great faith would do in the way you think a person of great faith would do them. Read your Bible and other inspiring books. Meditate on the passages that challenge you. Do what you think is in line with what you learn. Be daringly bold and tremendously in earnest, even if it is at times a bit inconvenient. There are growing pains connected with this kind of development, but they will not harm you. Unless yours is a very exceptional case, you will soon find that you have the faith you are trying to express, and from that on expressing it will not seem strange or be difficult.

But remember that this process is real and earnest. It will be of no use to undertake it in any other spirit or way. They fail who assume that faith is just something you have or haven't, something you are or are not given. Building faith is as practical and demanding as building a body. To learn it demands daily exercise and practice, like learning an art or skill.

YOU LIVE BY FAITH ALREADY:

We have now reached the point in these lessons where we can make the probably surprising statement that learning to live by faith should not be too much of a problem to you, because you live largely by faith already. You may not realize it, but you do. If you didn't you could not get along at all. You live by faith in all the common and ordinary things of life. All you need to do is to extend it to the uncommon and extraordinary ones.

Not only so, but you live by faith in the ordinary things of life in exactly the way to do it at the higher levels and in the farther reaches - in plain, simple, unreasoned, unthinking, and even unconscious confidence - by simply knowing or assuming that all is well and will be. Let us consider what is meant by that:

- Wherever you walk you step with faith that the ground will hold you up. Otherwise, how could you go anywhere?
- Every time you drink a glass of water you do so in faith that it is clean and pure. Otherwise, you would perish of thirst.
- Every time you take food you do so in faith that it is safe and good to eat, that no one or anything has poisoned or contaminated it. Otherwise, you could not long survive.
- Every time you make a purchase you do so in faith that the article is desirable and the tradesman honest. Otherwise, you could not obtain the necessities of life.
- Every time you take change in a transaction you do so in faith that the coins and bills are not counterfeit. Otherwise you could make no transactions.
- Every time you accept a friend you do so in faith that he is a worthy person and that his friendship is desirable. Otherwise yours would be a friendless life.
- Every time you engage in a conversation you do so in faith that what is told you is credible and worth while. Otherwise what would be the use of tongues and ears?

Think of the faith it takes to make a journey by air. Of old we had to trust the roads, or the rails, or the sea; but now we have to trust that lightest of all supports, the atmosphere.

You rise from terra firma, pulled upward by one or more whirring sets of propeller blades and supported by nothing but the fact that the vast weight of the plane and its load is held up by the vacuum created behind the ridges on the wings as the plane rushes along. In other words, you are stuck to the sky by two elongated vacuum cups.

You hang there, at a height of ten to twenty thousand feet, feeling as

though you were creeping along at a snail's pace when in fact you are rushing along at a speed of 350 miles an hour or more. Think of it. You would never do that if you could not put a great deal of confidence in the plane, its builders, and its pilots; yes, and even in the air itself. And, are you not putting considerable faith in God to keep you aloft till you reach your destination?

Yes, you live by faith all the time. Now bring God into the picture. Realize that He is the One who really makes all things safe and good. He could do infinitely more too, if you would extend your faith in Him to more and greater things.

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LIVING BY FAITH:

You see, while faith is something we have to take very much in earnest, it isn't something we have to agonize and strain for. That is just the thing not to do. Striving for it tends to push it back and away, because we get so full of tension that there is no room for faith or for anything else but the tension itself. Faith and tension do not go together. They are too opposite for that. Faith is as natural and flexible as tension is artificial and rigid.

Think of those who by faith have done wonders. They did not have to strain and tense themselves to get it. They only conceived a great idea, and believed in the idea and their ability to realize it with the help of God.

Take Columbus, for example. He believed mightily that the earth was a sphere, that one could sail around it, and that he could be that one. People were, as people always are, tremendously afraid of the unknown, and great distances on the ocean were quite unknown. The faith of Columbus took that fear out of his heart and left confidence in its place. The rest is history.

The idea of the airplane was an old one, at least as old as the time when Leonardo da Vinci was trying to build a flying machine to operate on the principle of the flight of birds. He would have flown too if he had been able to develop enough motor power. At any rate he was a pioneer who paved the way for others. We do not hear him spoken of as a hero of faith, but he was one.

When one day in 1903 the Wright Brothers kept a crude plane in the air for almost a minute that was nothing new or sudden. In their little Dayton bicycle shop they had been working on the da Vinci principle, failing till they built a ridge on the wings to create a vacuum in the air to hold the craft aloft. They were men of faith, believing in the possibility of a dream and working at it till they brought it within reach of mankind.

It was the same with the half dozen men who a few years earlier were trying to develop the automobile. One of them, Henry Ford, worked nights and holidays in an old tool shed back of his cottage home, assembling parts from junk heaps, till he produced a vehicle that would run. He wanted to take it to an endurance

test in Chicago, but did not have the money for trainfare and could not borrow it. The subsequent development of the motor industry shows that he was among those who, through faith, subdued kingdoms.

It has been the same with all those who expected great things from God and have attempted great things for God. Any of them could have chosen little, needless, unimportant things to do. They could have done them and been content, and the world would have been the loser. But they dared and ventured much, so God honored their efforts, and the world became the gainer. Unusual cases? Remember that they were children of the same God as you are.

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THE BATTLE FOR OURSELVES:

Now let us turn for a moment to the subjective side of the matter of living by faith, to its application not merely within the area of our own lives but within our own selves. That is the battleground where the struggle of faith begins - in our thoughts, feelings, attitudes, viewpoints, motives, and purposes.

Early in this series when we were considering the mountains we find across our roads and how to go about removing them we noted that all these obstructions are really created within ourselves, and that whatever removes them must therefore be an inward quality and power. In these paragraphs we are merely returning to that proposition to emphasize it a little more and to go into a little greater detail concerning it.

If you remember Hugo's great novel *Les Miserables* you will recall the long, terrible night during which the mayor of M. sur M., who was really Jean Valjean, the escaped convict, paced the floor trying to decide between privilege and duty. A tempest in a brain, the author called it. This is one of our great pictures of the battle for ourselves, the inner struggle to have faith enough to trust God and do what is right.

This battle for ourselves takes countless forms. Sometimes it takes the form of doubt. Dark, fierce foes rise to battle with the angel, Faith. Often the sides are so equally matched that you yourself have to make the final decision. Tennyson pictures such a struggle in *In Memoriam*, his account of his own struggle to have faith enough to believe his friend was not lost to him forever. He describes it thus:

"If e'er when faith had fallen asleep
I heard a voice, 'Believe no more,'
Or saw an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in a godless deep,

A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answered, 'I have felt'".

One of the greatest nourishers of doubt is sorrow, and one of the most common forms of sorrow is bereavement. Whittier, like Tennyson, met that inward enemy, wrestled with it, and arrived at a faith that was serene against sorrow. No wonder he could in old age contemplate the past and those who had vanished with it, and write the courageous lines:

"Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress trees,
Who hopeless lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play;
Who has not learned in hours of faith
The truth to sense and flesh unknown
That life is ever lord of death,
And love can never lose its own."

Whatever you need to contend for within yourself - a greater comfort, a more adequate life, a greater effectiveness, a closer walk with the divine, a project that challenges you - whatever it is, marshal the forces of your soul for a decisive battle, contend in faith, and you will win. Each of us must ultimately fight, and let us hope he may win, the battle for himself.

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THE GREAT TRILOGY:

Here and there in these lessons we have had occasion to mention love in its relation to faith. We have at least incidentally referred to hope in the same connection. Now let us put all three of these forces together and think of them as parts of a measureless unit of spiritual power.

They are like three doors leading into the same shrine, the Place of the Presence. One may enter through any one of them, but before he actually reaches the foot of the throne he finds that the three corridors have converged into a single approach. Whichever one of them one begins with, he sooner or later finds himself concerned with all three.

St. Paul closes his treatise on love in the Thirteenth Chapter of First Corinthians with a mention of the three in a single sweeping sentence. It is not a chance remark. It is with the most definite intention that he holds up life's three brightest jewels in a single, unbreakable strand. Love, he says, is the greatest, but it would be a failing thing without the other two, even as they would be without it.

When two or more substances are united we often get as a result a third substance different from both, like oxygen and hydrogen combining into water, or sodium and chlorine into salt. It is so with these spiritual elements of faith, hope, and love. The combination is greater than the sum of all the parts.

Let us think of them in this way then. Faith is the explorer and discoverer. It dreams out patterns to be realized and roads to be followed. Here and there it builds bridges over yawning chasms, crosses them, and keeps on.

Hope is the encourager. Faith can keep on and build these bridges on the way to an ideal or a fulfillment because hope keeps by and will not let it give up. Hope has the most tenacious of all wills. It clings, and will not loose its hold. Its song never ceases, and it stands by always to whisper into our failing hearts, "Don't give up. Keep on. Try again". No matter how gray the clouds are, it always sees a rift of blue sky somewhere.

Love is the motive power of all of this. We believe in, and seek, and do, and understand, and achieve, what we love. Why do we say that love never fails? Because it is supported by the daring of faith and the persistence of hope.

These are merely a few hints of the kindness you do yourself when you open your life fully to the royal trio, when you make its ever-winning combination a part of your equipment for happier, more courageous, more effective living, and use it in the accomplishment of that purpose.

Do you have faith, or hope, or love? Do you sometimes wonder yourself? There is a way to find the answer, if you do not have it ready. Whatever it is you wonder if you have, look for the other two. They go together. Strong as faith is, it is no solitary thing. It has its companions, and they are so close that they are actually parts of itself.

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CONCLUSION:

We now approach the close of this series of lessons on one of the greatest subjects that can be considered by the pilgrim on his journey of life. Let us make that approach with a few concluding hints in the hope of revealing faith a little more clearly yet as an everyday necessity like food and air, and one to be used in all of life's affairs as is the hand or the brain.

First, make your faith definite. People emphasize realism these days, and faith can meet their demand. So, like any wise master builder, have a pattern and apply your faith exactly to its realization.

Second, remember always to watch out for faith's two accompaniments: - hope and love. They are like the gasoline, oil, and water in your car. You can have ever so much of any one or any two, but you can't operate your motor without all three. Even then you can't operate it without the spark to activate and start them going. Keep in mind the importance of the combination. It is that which puts the single elements at their best.

Third, if you are in the habit of thinking of these things as theological formulas and processes, abandon that habit now. You may read about them in dusty

books, but you must find the things themselves in the arena of life's action. They are natural things, built into our daily existence. They are as much a part of the scheme of things as the sky, or laughter, or the flowers in the dooryard. Theology has its place, but it is too limited to express these things that are so vital, universal, and eternal.

Fourth, apply this combination in your daily affairs. That is what it is for, to affect the ordinary processes of life and to give them dignity, honor, and power.

Fifth, apply it in your human relationships. It is the secret of happiness in the family, of harmony among friends, of good will between strangers, and of success in business. It is the secret of cooperation, the light of wisdom, and the link between the human and the divine.

Sixth, be willing to start where you are and with what you have. You have to begin somewhere, and there is no better place than here or time than now. You never can travel the last mile if you do not travel the first one.

Seventh, keep learning and growing. If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed today you should have more than that tomorrow. If you are able to do great things with what you have today you should be able to do greater ones with what you have tomorrow. Do not expect to attain mastery in a day, but do expect to approach it.

Eighth, avoid tension. You do not need to strain at faith or the things to be accomplished by it. Faith itself removes that necessity. As Jesus has said, the lilies and the sparrows do very well without weakening worry or corroding fear. Commit your life and its affairs to Him and He will give you the desires of your heart - or better.

Ninth, keep your faith and its companion forces on the positive side. Thinking or feeling in the red leads to spiritual bankruptcy. Live in the spirit of the eternal Yea, the everlasting Amen.

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AFFIRMATION

I walk by faith, and find that I do not go blindly
but in the larger light faith sheds upon the way,
even for sight itself.

